

Economic [In]Justice Video Transcript

[Mark Palmer] For us at Greenbank, we use sport just for that, in terms of opening up opportunities for people with disabilities and for the local communities to see what's available. I joined the Academy when it was first built in '99, and on my first time of coming here, one of the things I saw was the fact that it was just about getting people to have a go, to try our sport and within Liverpool, you've got such a huge reputation of sport and physical activity and a huge range of different facilities and opportunities. And it was just about giving people that opportunity to get on the ladder, to try it and see if you like it. And it very much complemented the training and the education aspects of what we offer and a lot of the time in PE, it's just the fact that you're not given the opportunity. Once you're given the opportunity and people break down the barriers further, you're away.

[Sandra Hulme] Once you begin to excel in anything, everything else just comes with it. Your confidence grows.

[Pete Wyman] People come into the centre and they could look at, look at the sports hall and they can see a totally blind guy running around at 100 miles an hour and then smashing a football into the top corner of the net. And that inspiration, when you see it. I get inspired by it every day, but when someone that has not really seen that before can come in and see a totally blind guy just excelling in what he's doing, it kind of changes people's perceptions of what's possible.

[Sandra] I think what the problem was that young people with physical disability were not finding anywhere. There were some special school and they were being educated. And some children were academically very bright. But because of the physical disability, I stress that at that time, they weren't offered work, you know. They would go for interview or they just weren't even considered. So that was the backdrop, really. It was also an awful lot of inequality in general. And often people, particularly with physical disabilities at that time, were often forgotten and not aspired to and Gerry himself, Gerry Kinsella, who was the founder of Greenbank originally, was just keen, more than keen really, passionate, on making sure that everyone was included, basically.

[Pete] Gerry being Gerry, his ambition was much, much bigger than what people were looking to give him. But one of the jobs he was meant to go into was to be a lift attendant. That was a job that disabled people, at that point, was you know, that was alright for you to go into, was to be a lift attendant. But that was not what Gerry was ever going to be. So, he actually took over, he bought the school that he went to and he made it into Greenbank College and he then looked to basically raise the standards of what disabled people could get in the area in terms of education, in terms of their sport.

[Mark] To provide those training opportunities, but also to provide those real life work experience that people can achieve in. And I think we've got quite a number of different people, both, you know, with the Sports Academy, we've had students that have gone on through doing education courses to then become instructors, gym instructors, and work in coaching. And also you see a few, some people, at the Academy, people that have gone on to become teachers and that now and now are coming back and using our facilities and getting involved in our events programmes and our community programmes and working with us to actually create that current infrastructure, if you like.

[Pete] The other thing, I think, that Greenbank has done is it has spin-offs. So someone will become a student or someone will take part in sport here, and then they'll go away and create their own kind of disability sports club or whatever or manufacturing business. There's been several spin-offs, people making wheelchairs with Greenbank and stuff like that. So, it's kind of, acted as a catalyst of people coming in, spinning out and then doing their own thing.

[Sandra] It just feels to me a little bit sad, still, that were still having to rely so heavily on charitable funds. I think it should be much more recognised that it's an established part of society and we should get equal to what other get.

[Pete] It's about the right, for me, being a sports development worker, it's about the right of a disabled child and adult to school. And the fact that, in a lot of times, they didn't have, and have never had, the same opportunity as a non-disabled person. And that's recognised, Sport England recognise it, all the statistics and everything. So, we're still fighting for that right, for me, of sport and leisure for a disabled person.